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C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 000629

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TAGS: [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [BM](#) [MY](#)
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR BACKS UNHCR IN MEETING WITH FM HAMID

REF: A. KUALA LUMPUR 540 - URGING FM ON IRAN SANCTIONS
[1](#)B. KUALA LUMPUR 448 - UNHCR HONEYMOON OVER

Classified By: Ambassador Christopher J. LaFleur, reasons 1.4 (b and d)

[1](#)1. (C) The Ambassador highlighted the important role played by the UNHCR in Malaysia as part of his March 22 call on Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar (ref A). The UNHCR's work remains essential to protecting refugees, the Ambassador noted. The U.S. is helping Malaysia with the refugee burden through a major resettlement program this year for Burmese Chin refugees, and the UNHCR's role in the process is vital. At the same time, the Ambassador explained, we were aware of Malaysian concern that U.S. and UNHCR efforts should not become a pull factor for drawing more refugees and migrants to Malaysia.

[1](#)2. (C) The Foreign Minister described the country's refugee situation as "a problem for us (Malaysia)" and "difficult." He noted that a large number of Burmese refugees lived in his constituency in Johor. Hamid said he had concern for the refugees, particularly the children and how they might receive education. The Minister signaled his appreciation for U.S. refugee efforts. He also asked that there be "no publicity" for the U.S. resettlement program so as to avoid creating a magnet for more refugee arrivals.

[1](#)3. (C) Comment: The Ambassador pointedly raised our support for UNHCR against the backdrop of recent public criticism of the organization emanating in particular from the Home Affairs Ministry, ref B. The March 22 meeting's focus on the Iran nuclear issue is reported ref A.
LAFLEUR